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NLM TO HOLD BILLINGS CENTENNIAL IN JUNE

On June 17, 1965, the National Library of Medicine will observe the 100th anniversary of the assumption of the directorship of the Library by Dr. John Shaw Billings, who established the institution as a national resource for medical literature.

Under Dr. Billings' leadership from 1865 to 1895, the Library, then known as the Library of the Office of the Surgeon General of the Army, grew from a collection of 2,253 volumes to more than 116,847 books and 191,598 pamphlets. Dr. Billings also produced the famed Index-Catalogue, an outstanding guide to the literature of medicine of his time and before.

The Billings Centennial program will consist of an afternoon and an evening session. The afternoon program will be presented to the public at 2 p.m. on the front steps of the Library. Senator Lister Hill of Alabama, Representative John E. Fogarty of Rhode Island, and Representative Oren Harris of Arkansas will be the principal speakers. Guests will include members of Congress, senior officials of the government, and leaders in the fields of medicine, medical librarianship, and medical communication.

The evening session, a symposium featuring historical papers on the life and career of Dr. Billings, will be held at 8 p.m. in the Library. Symposium panelists will include Dr. Jean A. Curran, Professor Emeritus, History of Medicine, State University of New York; Bess Furman, former Washington newspaperwoman and author, now at work on a popular history of the Public Health Service; and Dr. Frank B. Rogers, Librarian of the Denison Memorial Library, University of Colorado Medical Center.

Dr. Curran's topic will be "John Shaw Billings' Contributions to the Advancement of Medical Education." Bess Furman will present a paper titled, "As Billings Ordered - Public Health." Dr. Rogers will speak on "The Life of John Shaw Billings." Attendance at the evening session will be by special invitation.

Following the afternoon program, the public will be invited to tour the Library and view an exhibit depicting Dr. Billings' many achievements during his long and varied career.

John Shaw Billings is chiefly known for having laid the foundations for modern medical librarianship as it is practiced today the world over. Among other accomplishments, he set up a comprehensive author-subject index, the Index-Catalogue, of the Library's collection. Dr. William H. Welch, of Johns Hopkins University, described this development as the most important American contribution to medical science in the 19th century. Billings also established the Index Medicus as a monthly classified guide to the periodical literature of medicine.

It was Billings who conceived the idea of a punch card tabulation system for census taking. This method of statistical manipulation was adopted by Herman Hollerith from Billings' suggestion for use in the 1880 Census. Billings' contributions to fields originally as diverse as bibliography and mechanical data processing were eventually joined in the service of the library which he helped to establish. The development of MEDLARS, the Library's computer-based Medical Literature Analysis and Retrieval System, can be traced back to Billings' punch card idea. Today's Index Medicus is a product of MEDLARS.

In addition, Billings was a surgeon, a sanitarian, an educator, and an authority on building construction. He participated in the planning of Johns Hopkins Hospital, Barnes Hospital (Soldier's Home, District of Columbia), the Army Medical Museum, the Laboratory of Hygiene and the William Pepper Laboratory of Clinical Medicine of the University of Pennsylvania, Peter Bent Brigham Hospital in Boston, and the New York Public Library. He was one of the original incorporators of the Carnegie Institution of Washington.

While serving as vice-president of the National Board of Health, Billings also invented the system of Federal grants-in-aid in support of medical research and awarded the first grants for investigations relating to air pollution and drug toxicity.

UNIVERSITY OF COLORADO TO ESTABLISH MEDLARS CENTER

Dr. Martin M. Cummings, Director of the Library, has announced the award of a $25,000, six-month contract to the University of Colorado Medical Center for the establishment and operation of a regional MEDLARS search center. MEDLARS stands for Medical Literature Analysis and Retrieval System, the Library's computer-based bibliographic data processing operation.

The Colorado facility will be the second in a proposed network of MEDLARS centers using duplicates of MEDLARS' computer tapes to conduct literature searches for individual scientists and research institutions in the regional area.

The first MEDLARS search center was established last December in the University of California at Los Angeles. The UCLA pilot center is reprogramming MEDLARS data tapes into a language adaptable to other computer equipment. At Colorado, the duplicate tapes will be used on a computer directly compatible with MEDLARS.

Under the new contract, the National Library of Medicine will train professional library staff from the University of Colorado in MEDLARS search procedures. In turn, the University will furnish the National Library of Medicine with reports on the users' evaluation of the service.

Project Officer for the National Library of Medicine is Charles J. Austin, Chief of the Library's Data Processing Division. Dr. Frank B. Rogers is Project Officer for the University of Colorado.

NLM TO PUBLISH NOTES FOR MEDICAL CATALOGERS

The National Library of Medicine has announced plans to issue a new publication, Notes for Medical Catalogers, as an aid to library workers who use NLM bibliographic tools such as Medical Subject Headings (MeSH), National Library of Medicine Classification, and National Library of Medicine Catalog.

Notes for Medical Catalogers will serve as a vehicle for the issuance of additions and changes to the NLM Classification and to MeSH; it will also indicate how the Library's Cataloging Section adapts MeSH for the cataloging of books and new serial titles. Occasionally it will explain the Library's descriptive cataloging policies when they differ from standard library practice as set forth by the American Library Association and the Library of Congress.

The first issue of Notes for Medical Catalogers will appear in April. The publication will be issued irregularly as the need for information arises. Libraries may order the publication by writing Mr. Samuel Lazerow, Chief, Technical Services Division, National Library of Medicine, 8600 Wisconsin Avenue, Bethesda, Maryland 20014. Notes will be distributed to all readers who have asked to be placed on the MeSH mailing list.

NLM BOARD OF REGENTS MEETS IN MARCH

The Board of Regents of the National Library of Medicine will hold its first meeting of the new year on March 18.

Among the guest speakers will be Dr. Robert B. Livingston, Associate Chief for Program Development, Division of Research Facilities and Resources, National Institutes of Health. One of several visiting scientists and scholars at work on long-term research projects in the Library, Dr. Livingston is preparing a new edition of Fulton's Physiology of the Nervous System.

The Board of Regents will also hear presentations by Lt. Gen. William B. Ely, Deputy Director, Defense Research and Engineering, Department of Defense; Dr. Ellis F. Kelsey, Special Assistant to the Surgeon General for Scientific Information, Public Health Service; and Mr. Foster E. Mohrhardt, Director, National Agricultural Library.

During the meeting, the Army Surgeon General's Office will officially present to the Library a historical exhibit on the development of the Library under the Department of the Army and the Public Health Service.

Accepting on behalf of the Library will be Dr. Luther L. Terry, Surgeon General of the Public Health Service; Dr. Norman Q. Brill, Chairman of the Department of Psychiatry, University of California at Los Angeles, and Chairman of the Board of Regents; and Dr. Martin M. Cummings, Director of the Library.

The four-panel, diorama exhibit is one of several items acquired by the Library with funds resulting from a private bequest to the "Army Medical Library," forerunner of the National Library of Medicine, by the late Mrs. Emma Wheat Gillmore in the name of her husband, Dr. Robert Tracy Gillmore, and herself. The exhibit will be displayed in the Lobby of the building.

NLM GOES TO THE WORLD'S FAIR

Five members of the National Library of Medicine staff will represent the Library at the New York World's Fair this summer. They will help man the LIBRARY/USA exhibit in the U.S. Pavilion's Information Center.

Mr. L. Robert Newburn, Miss Patricia Galagan, Mrs. Betty Henry, Miss C. Elizabeth Morrison, and Miss Ellen Wells have been assigned to the Fair from July 6 until August 25. They will be available to answer questions about the Library and its Medical Literature Analysis and Retrieval System (MEDLARS).

LIBRARY/USA is a project of the American Library Association, in cooperation with the Special Libraries Association and the American Documentation Institute. The exhibit consists of an Information Center staffed by a number of reference librarians, with a collection of selected reference books, supplemented by a UNIVAC 490 Real-Time System computer to provide annotated reading lists and essays in four languages.

NLM DIRECTOR ATTENDS RESEARCH SYMPOSIUM

Dr. Martin M. Cummings, Director of the Library, participated in the International Symposium on National Policies for Biomedical Research which was held this month in Williamsburg, Virginia. The meeting was sponsored by the National Institutes of Health.

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